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## DEC Releases 2017 Monitoring Report for Bacteria at Coastal Areas in Ketchikan

(KETCHIKAN, AK) — The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has released the 2017 Ketchikan Beach Monitoring report. The project report can be found at <a href="http://dec.alaska.gov/water/wqsar/wqs/beachprogram.htm">http://dec.alaska.gov/water/wqsar/wqs/beachprogram.htm</a>. The report summarizes and discusses the results of coastal water quality monitoring for fecal waste contamination near Ketchikan, Alaska during the 2017 recreation season.

As part of a statewide recreational beach monitoring program, marine water samples were collected at nine coastal areas to evaluate fecal coliform and enterococci bacteria levels from July 18 to September 13, 2017. Due to elevated levels of bacteria, samples were also tested to see if the bacteria came from human sources. Samples were taken at South Refuge Cove Beach, Seaport Beach, Rotary Park Beach also known as Bugges Beach, Thomas Basin, Beacon Hill, Knudson Cove, South Point Higgins Beach, Sunset Beach, and Shull Beach. Ketchikan Indian Community assisted DEC in collecting the water samples.

The report indicates recreation criteria for water quality were exceeded nearly every week from July 24 through August 29 at most of the nine locations. In addition, human fecal waste sources were associated with all of the nine monitoring locations along the Ketchikan coastline. Copies of previous public notifications are also incorporated into the report.

DEC plans to monitor a second recreation season in 2018 to further evaluate the bacteria levels in Ketchikan's coastal marine waters. The monitoring program will notify the public when levels exceed recreation criteria and will help support the development of recommendations for best management practices and wastewater treatment to reduce bacteria levels along the Ketchikan coastline.

The DEC beach monitoring program is part of a nationwide effort to decrease the incidence of water-borne illness at public beaches under the federal Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act, funded by an EPA BEACH grant to DEC. Since 2002, the DEC beach monitoring program has been collecting water quality samples at coastal recreation beaches throughout the state. Beaches were selected based on risk factors identified in community surveys. Other communities in Southeast Alaska have also been monitored including Douglas Island, Haines, Juneau, Petersburg, and Wrangell. Sample results have not shown persistent elevated levels of bacteria in these Southeast communities.

For more information about the Alaska beach monitoring program, visit the Alaska BEACH Grant Program Website: <a href="http://dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/beachprogram.htm">http://dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/wqs/beachprogram.htm</a>.